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OUR SAVIOUR'S
COMMISSION to his MINISTERS,
Explained and Improved.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT
CANTERBURY, and in *Worship-street*, LONDON,
At the Administration of the Ordinance of Baptism.

By DAN TAYLOR. *Baptist Minister*

Published at the Request of the Hearers in both Places.

In Process of Time, the best Institutions are apt to decline, and by insensible Degrees to swerve, and depart from the Perfection of their first State; and therefore it is a good Rule to preserve Things from Corruption and Degeneracy, often to look back to the first Institution, and by that to correct those Imperfections and Errors which will almost unavoidably creep in with Time.

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

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[Faint, mostly illegible text on a piece of aged, torn paper. The text appears to be organized into several horizontal lines or sections, possibly representing a list or a series of entries. Some faint words like "UNITED STATES" and "OFFICE" are visible in the upper portion.]

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MATTHEW xxviii. 19. 20.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. AMEN.

WE who are entrusted with the sacred office of the gospel-ministry, often find it necessary to compare our proceedings with the directions given us by our great master, the Lord Jesus Christ; lest by deviating from these directions we offend him, and prove unprofitable to you; and lest, at the end of our labours, when "every man's work shall be tried, of what sort it is,"* we be obliged to "take up a lamentation," and to confess with grief and shame, that "our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain."† A prospect so alarming as this, can hardly fail to awaken every faithful minister to be jealous over himself, and over his people "with a godly jealousy, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty; so his mind, or theirs should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."‡

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It

* 1 Cor. iii. 13. † 1 Cor. xv. 14. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 2. 3.

It appears likewise proper, at some times, even in our public ministrations, to lay before *you*, brethren, what our Lord has enjoined upon *us* for your welfare; that you may have an opportunity of judging, as you have certainly a right to judge, respecting our fidelity to *him* and to you. There are many seasons when this is peculiarly proper; and I imagine the present to be one of those seasons, as several ministers have now the pleasure of an interview in the house of God.* Hereby as I humbly trust, both *you* and *we* shall be edified together.

The passage I have read is evidently a proper foundation for such reflections. It contains the last solemn charge of our blessed Redeemer to his apostles. And it particularly respects their conduct in propagating his truth, and in advancing his interest and kingdom in the world; after he had laid down his life for our sins, and was risen from the dead; and when he was about to ascend into heaven; where he now lives and reigns at his Father's right hand "making intercession for them that come unto God by him." †

There are two things, if I mistake not, which the generality of professing Christians allow, and which I may therefore venture to take for granted, concerning the words of my text. That they are still to be considered

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* When this discourse was delivered at Canterbury several ministers were present. † Heb. vii. 25.

as a warrant and directory for all ministers, in all parts of the Christian world, so far as their circumstances will admit of the practice of them.—And that this commission is to be regarded in this view, to the end of time. For the work here enjoined upon us will ever be necessary ; and the promise subjoined is a clear proof that the words contain a directory for ministers till that tremendous period when we must all be called to give an account of ourselves to God ; when “ we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” *

It is therefore the duty of all men, but especially of all ministers, to study this commission with great seriousness and reverence ; and to reduce its important contents to practice.

Our text divides itself into two general parts.—A direction given by our Saviour to his ministers ;—and a promise subjoined to that direction. Let us consider each distinctly.

FIRST. The direction or commission. This consists of three branches. That part of our ministry which respects the unconverted. The administration of the ordinance of baptism to those who are the proper subjects of it ;—and the instructions we are afterwards to give to those who are baptized.

A 3

(1). That

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

(1.) That part of our ministry which respects the unconverted. To this our Saviour plainly refers when he says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

It is a fact well known, that when these words were spoken, the nations were covered with darkness, and with superstition and idolatry of different kinds, and in different degrees, in the several parts of the world. Only Judea chiefly, and, perhaps, some adjacent countries, in less degrees, enjoyed the knowledge of the sacred oracles.

The apostles were peculiarly devoted to the work of preaching, and in an extraordinary manner qualified for it. And they were not, as *pastors* now are, placed over so many different churches; but as their very name signifies,* were *sent* abroad, and appointed to propagate the fundamentals of Christianity, in every part of the world, where providence opened the way for them, and where they obtained admittance. When sinners embraced the gospel, and were baptized, churches were formed, and pastors placed over them, to "watch for their souls," and to build them up in faith and holiness. This is abundantly clear from the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and the epistles in general.†

Pastors of churches have not opportunity to *extend* their labours in any comparable measure,

* The word *apostle* signifies messenger, or one who is sent. † Acts xiv. 22, 23. Tit. i. 5.

measure, as the apostles had. Yet it is very manifest, that, as we have undeniable proof from constant observation, from universal experience, and from the current language of scripture, that mankind are every where depraved, and deviating from the will of God, and that the gospel, which is the only effectual means of recovering them from this dreadful situation, is still the same, and to be preached for the same purposes; I say, it is from hence manifest that all ministers are still under the most indispensable obligations to take the same methods which the apostles took, so far as providence gives them opportunity and capacity. Hence follows the necessity of carefully studying this commission, in order to practice what it enjoins.

I believe we shall all acknowledge, Brethren, that we cannot take a more easy and safe method to understand and practice our duty in this particular, and rightly to perform it, than if we examine what the apostles taught mankind, and make it our care and business to imitate them. But were we to trace this matter fully, as it admits, and to examine every subject contained in their discourses, we could not leave time enough to improve the other parts of our text. We can, however, avoid this labour, by referring to some compendiums which the Holy Ghost hath wisely and graciously caused to be recorded, and which will completely answer our present purpose. Suffice it, on this oc-

caſion, to mention two, and more particularly to conſider one, of theſe compendiums. They both reſpect the miniſtry of the apoſtle Paul. Paul was not indeed called to the knowledge of Chriſtianity when our Saviour gave this commiſſion, and much leſs to the miniſtry of it; but I perſuade myſelf we ſhall all conclude, that his preaching was conformable to that of the other apoſtles.

The former paſſage I refer to, which I call a compendium or epitome of his public preaching, is found in his farewell diſcourſe to the Ephesian elders, who met him at Miletus, in his journey to Jeruſalem. Having laboured three years in thoſe parts, he reminds them of the manner in which he had conducted himſelf, and the doctrine he had taught. "Teſtifying," ſays he, "both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:"* The other paſſage of this kind is in the apoſtle's vindication of himſelf before King Agrippa, and Feſtus the Roman governor. Having mentioned the glorious deſign of his miniſtry, he informs them what the matter of his preaching was, in order to accompliſh that deſign. "I ſhewed, he ſays, firſt unto them of Damſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent, and turn

to

* Acts xx. 21.

to God, and do works meet for repentance.*

To avoid prolixity, we briefly consider the former of these passages, which, indeed, contains nearly the same with the latter; and which is evidently left on record, as a compendium of the apostle's public ministrations, when he went abroad to convert sinners, and to establish churches in the several parts of the world where he travelled. And we may hence clearly and safely conclude what *we* ought to teach men, and what they ought to be practically acquainted with, prior to their baptism, and admission into church-fellowship.

Repentance towards God is mentioned first in order. Let us consider what is meant by it, and hint at the necessity and importance of it.

Repentance is not conviction of sin.—Conviction of sin is no part of repentance. But it is absolutely necessary in order to it. For I shall never repent of that which I do not see the evil and impropriety of. Before the Jews repented they were “pricked at the heart” by the apostle Peter’s sermon.† And in order to bring men to repentance, the Holy Ghost is sent to “convince the world of sin.”‡ Before the prodigal “came to his father,” he first came to himself;” took a view of his folly, and the misery

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* Acts xxvi. 20.
Luke xv. 17, 18.

† Acts ii. 37. ‡ John xvi.

consequent upon it ; and then came to this salutary determination, " I will arise, and go to my father." The psalmist relates his experience of the matter thus. " I thought on my ways," and then " turned my feet unto thy testimonies." But then, from all these passages, it clearly appears, that repentance is not conviction of sin ; but an effect of it.

Nor is reformation of conduct repentance, or any part of it : But when reformation proceeds from a right principle, it is the effect of repentance. Reformation is therefore called " bringing forth fruits meet for repentance ;" * and " doing works meet for repentance." † The *tree* must be made good, before its *fruit* can be good. And the heart must be turned, before the life can be properly reformed. It is evident there is the same difference between repentance, and works meet for it, as there is between the tree and its fruit.

Nor is repentance sorrow for sin ; but an effect of it. " Godly sorrow *worketh* repentance." 2 Cor. vii. 10. Therefore godly sorrow is not repentance itself ; but it is necessary in order that true repentance may be exercised, as the cause is necessary to produce the effect.

Repentance then, is the " changing or turning of the mind" as the word signifies, ‡ and

* Matt. iii. 8. † Acts. xxvi. 20. ‡ Μετανοειν, a μετανοω, proprie, post factum sapio, & de errore admisso ita doleo, at corrigam. Pastor in verbum.

as we understand it in common life. "When therefore, you are convinced of your guilt before God your maker, and the sin you have committed against him, whereby you have provoked the eyes of his glory, have trampled on his goodness, and abused his compassion, and thereby deserved his vengeance: and when in consequence of these reflections, you feel sorrow and grief in your minds; so that you now resolve by the grace of God to offend him no more, but, henceforth, to devote yourselves to his service, the remaining part of your life," this is repentance towards God. Only I beg leave to remind you, that as this repentance is *inward* and *cordial*, so is it *universal* too. When a sinner repents truly and to purpose, according to the prophet's description, "he turneth away from *all* his transgressions that he hath committed." And the direction of the Almighty is, "repent, and turn from *all* your transgressions." "Cast away from you *all* your transgressions," &c. * When you, my dear friends, truly repent, you consider what evil tempers or practices you have indulged yourselves in, what part of the will of God you have neglected; and you turn with all your heart from every part of iniquity, both in *omission* and *commission*, and resolve, through divine assistance, to "go and sin no more."

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I said

* Ezek. xviii. 28, 30, 31.

I said both in omission and commission ; for it is evident from our relation to God, our dependence upon him, and the whole tenor of Scripture, that our neglect or omission of duty is abominable in his sight, and brings misery and ruin on him who is guilty of it, as well as commission of sin, by doing what the Lord forbids. Hence, to name only one passage, out of many ; we have that awfully compassionate address of the holy prophet, which I pray God to impress deep both on your hearts and mine.

“ Even from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts.” *

Thus, my dear audience, ye who profess to be converted, may examine whether your repentance be real, genuine, and scriptural. Thus we call on you who are confessedly unconverted, to turn from all your iniquities ; and we assure you all, both professors and prophane, in the name, and by the authority of him who cannot lie, that without this repentance, there is no hope for you. For “ except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” † Because this is a concern of such awful and infinite weight, we who are employed for God, and for you, in the work of the ministry, are sent out to call you to repentance, and

* Mal. iii. 7. † Luke xiii. 3, 5.

and to use every argument, and propose every consideration, which under the direction and blessing of our great master, is most likely to bring you to "repentance towards God."

But though repentance is one capital part of our ministry, and so important that without it your everlasting misery is certain and unavoidable; yet we are not to stop here. Nor are we according to the gospel plan, authorised to assure you that this will obtain the pardon of your sins, or your peace with God, whose holy laws you have broken, and whom you have grievously offended. We cannot find that our Lord and his apostles ever taught this to their auditors; nor did the primitive saints ever ascribe their enjoyment of these inestimable benefits to their repentance. They never inform us they were justified, or pardoned, or saved by their repentance, or through their repentance. On the contrary, their uniform language is, that "by grace they are saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God."* That, "being justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."† And these declarations perfectly correspond with the words of our apostle, and the account he gives us of the doctrine he taught; which was not only "repentance towards God,"
but

* Ephes. ii. 8. † Rom. v. 1.

but also "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Faith *towards* our Lord Jesus Christ," or faith *in* our Lord Jesus Christ, is the second part of what we are commissioned to teach mankind. I take it for granted, at present, for want of time, that these two phrases signify the same thing. Faith *towards*, or *in* the Lord Jesus Christ, signifies a *trust* or *confidence* in him, as a complete Saviour from sin and hell, on the authority of the gospel, which represents him as such*. For the illustration of this important subject, I beg your attention to a few observations.

All men have offended their Creator by sin; and hereby have exposed themselves to his displeasure. The law which we have all broken, pronounces condemnation against all the transgressors of it. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them," is the invariable sentence of it.† "The wages of sin is death."‡ To this we are all liable; for, we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God.§ We are therefore, whether we consider it or not, "we are all by nature, the children of wrath."|| From this dreadful state we must be

* That this is the Scripture representation of faith in Jesus Christ, I have endeavoured to prove at large in the ninth Chapter of Fundamentals of Religion in Faith and Practice, page 227—255. † Gal. iii. 10. ‡ Rom. vi. 23. § Rom. iii. 23. || Ephes. ii. 3.

be delivered, or we must lie down under the consequences of it in everlasting despair.

But we cannot deliver ourselves from this miserable condition. It is every man's duty to reform his conduct; but it is neither consistent with reason, nor the gospel of Christ, to suppose that this reformation will procure the pardon of past offences. Not with reason. For if our future obedience were perfect, which no serious considerate man will pretend; yet this is no more than our duty, and therefore makes no atonement for what is past. And if our future obedience, after reformation be defective, as it certainly is, then we stand in need of pardon for this defect, rather than deserve, on that account, the forgiveness of our former transgressions. Unless therefore, the gospel have revealed it, reason can find no foundation to hope for pardon on account of reformation of conduct. And the gospel asserts just the contrary. "Not of works, lest any man should boast."* "Not by works of righteousness which we have done.† This is the language of inspiration.

Yet fallen man is not left in a state of despair, or without hope. Adored be the Father of all our mercies, another way is opened, which does honor to his justice, while it demonstrates the riches of his grace, and suits the condition of poor fallen man.

Away

* Ephes. ii. 9. † Tit. iii. 5.

A way is opened for guilty man to be made happy, which, though human reason could never have discovered; yet, being contrived by infinite wisdom, and revealed in the word of infallible truth, reason cannot but approve; and the sensible sinner will embrace with unfeigned gratitude. For "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* Here is the foundation, the *only* foundation, the solid, never-failing foundation of all our hope: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."† Jesus "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."‡ He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God: §

Our blessed Redeemer having thus laid down his life for sinners, there is now a new and better covenant introduced, "established upon better promises || than those of the law. Of this covenant he is the mediator; and by him alone we can approach our offended God, and be accepted with him. According to the tenor of this covenant, salvation is not works; for "if it be of works, it is no more of grace;" and if it be of grace, it cannot be of works; for these are diametrically opposite to each other. "It is therefore of faith that it might be by grace."

* John iii. 16. † Isai. liii. 6. ‡ Pet. ii. 24.
§ Pet. iii. 18. || Heb. viii. 6.

grace.”* And the cheering language of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth on Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life. “ And by him all that believe are justified from all things.”† And true christians can declare, with holy triumph “ being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”‡

However, it is necessary to be farther observed here, that whenever a guilty repenting sinner embraces, and accepts of the Lord Jesus as a Saviour to “ deliver him from wrath to come,”§ he likewise sincerely accepts him as a king and governor, to rule him by his word, and to renew him, and save him from sin, by his spirit, which he always gives to those who believe in him; ¶ and thus they willingly and chearfully become his disciples and followers : which opens my way to another remark on these words of our Saviour, which, perhaps, you would think it defective in me to omit.

You have undoubtedly heard it observed, that the word μαθηταίς, here translated *teach*, properly signifies *disciple*, or make disciples, and consequently, the meaning is, “ make disciples of all nations.” And it is readily granted that this is frequently ¶ the signification of the Greek word. But then it

* Rom. iv. 16. † Acts xiii. 39. ‡ Rom. v. 1.
§ 1 Thess. i. 10. ¶ John vii. 38, 39. ¶ I say frequently, for that it has not necessarily, or always this signification is very clear. See Dr. Stenner's Answer to Mr. Addington, p. 135, &c.

it is equally certain that it never signifies to make disciples by any other method, than by teaching them; nor is it possible for ministers to take any other rational method of making people disciples of Christ. Nor is there the least appearance of evidence that any other method was ever taken by the apostles. I know, indeed, it has been intimated, that *infants* are made disciples of Christ, by baptism. But this cannot be admitted without proof, and proof of it can never be produced. Let any one shew, if he be able, wherein a baptized infant is more a disciple of Christ, than one that is unbaptized. This is a fair and reasonable demand; and till some regard be paid to it, and some proof given that children are made disciples of Christ by baptism, it is unreasonable to desire, or to expect that it should be admitted as a fact.

Here let it be considered, that men are naturally averse to Christ, and pursuing the way to misery. They are both *ignorant* of Christ, and their minds are *opposite* to him. Both scripture and universal observation, makes this awfully manifest. Now it is plainly necessary they should be turned from their rebellion against him, and from the ruinous paths of sin; and be instructed in the "things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ;" * otherwise,

* Acts viii. 12.

otherwise, how can they be expected to give up themselves to him, as his disciples? And whoever reads the Acts of the Apostles will find that these first preachers did invariably take this method.

Further; a disciple is only another word for a *scholar*. The church is, (so to speak) the school of Christ. All who are willing to give up themselves to his tuition, are here trained up in the knowledge and practice of his holy will; and taught, though in a very inferior manner, the delightful employments of that happy world, where they shall enjoy him, and dwell in his presence, through never ending ages. Now can *infants* be employed in this work? Are *infants* capable of giving up themselves to the tuition of Christ? If it be said "their *parents* can give them up to Christ in this ordinance;"—it must be replied, But who hath authorised parents to do this? And wherein do children that are said to be baptized in their infancy, appear to learn of Christ more than other children? Not at all. I appeal, then, to all impartial men, whether the practice of baptizing infants be not a mere human tradition; and whether the advantages that are pretended to result from it, be not a mere nothing.

I add, that this account of our Saviour's meaning in the commission, and of the order in which ministers are to perform what is here enjoined, is yet farther confirmed from all the characters given us in the New Testament,

Testament, of those who were baptized in the primitive times. Let us refer to these characters ; and let any man say if any one of them be applicable to a state of infancy. Those baptized at Jerusalem, were such as “ gladly received the word.” * Those baptized at Samaria were they who “ believed Philip, preaching concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ—both men and women.” † The case of the Eunuch can admit of no dispute. ‡ Those baptized at Cæsaria were they “ who had received the Holy Ghost.” § Those baptized at Philippi in Lydia’s household, are called *brethren* ; || and Lydia’s great distance from home, her business at Philippi, her having no husband named, and the household being called *her’s* ; are so many farther reasons to suppose that she had no infants in her household. Those baptized at Philippi, in the jailor’s household, were they to whom Paul and Silas “ spake the word of the Lord,” and who “ believed in God.” ¶ The Corinthians who were baptized, were such as “ heard and believed.” ** The household of Stephanas, baptized by the apostle Paul, were such as “ addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” †† Hence it clearly appears that all who were baptized by the apostles,

* Acts ii. 41. † Acts viii. 12. ‡ Acts viii. 36.
 39. § Acts x. 47. || Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40. ¶ Acts
 xvi. 32, 34. ** Acts xviii. 8. †† 1 Cor. i. 16.
 xvi. 15.

apostles, were such as were first taught repentance and faith. Hence we also learn most evidently,—that the first great work of ministers is to teach men these two great articles ;—that we ought not to baptize any till these two great articles are taught them ; and that all who are thus taught, ought to be baptized. I only add, on this part of the subject, that whoever considers the parallel places in the two other Evangelists, will find that they also confirm what we have advanced above. *

Let us now proceed to the second part of our Lord's commission ; which respects those who are taught.—“ Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

A very little consideration is sufficient, one would think, to satisfy an ingenuous mind, who are the persons intended by our Saviour, in the little word THEM, as the subjects of baptism. Criticisms are scarcely needful here ; nor have we time for them, if this were a proper place. But hardly any thing can be easier than to observe, that our Lord must either mean “ baptizing all persons indiscriminately,” or “ baptizing those who are taught.” The former cannot be his intention ; for that would authorize ministers to baptize all ideots, infidels, heathens, and prophane persons, of every character. But this is so wild an interpretation, so contrary

* See Mar. xvi. 15, 16. Luke xxiv. 47.

trary to the tenor of the New Testament, to the genius of Christianity, and to the common sense of all mankind, that it is universally discarded. The latter, therefore, must be our Saviour's meaning ; i. e. " Baptizing those who are taught." This sense of the words is natural and obvious, and confirmed by all the passages where the characters of those who were baptized by the apostles are mentioned, as we have already seen. For no man can produce the least evidence of any who were baptized by these primitive ministers; but such as repented, received the word gladly, believed with the heart, &c. or made a profession of doing so. And as the practice of the apostles is, unquestionably, the best comment on our Saviour's directions, it unavoidably follows that this is the only meaning of the passage. And as it is evident, on the one hand, that none were baptized by the apostles, but such as professed to be instructed in the fundamentals of Christianity ; so it is very clear on the other, that all who are thus instructed, ought to be baptized. For as we have no account of any who were baptized before they appeared and professed, to have received such instruction ; so neither have we the least intimation, that any who repented and believed in Christ Jesus, neglected the ordinance of baptism.

That it is the indispensable duty of all who are thus instructed to give up themselves publicly

publicly to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism is manifest from many considerations which I have not time now to *enlarge on*; and must only beg leave to *mention* a few of them.—Our blessed Saviour, our great pattern, hath set us an example of it.* He speaks of it as a part of righteousness †—Christ was owned at this ordinance in an extraordinary manner, by the Father and the Holy Ghost. ‡—Rejecting this ordinance, is “rejecting the counsel of God against ourselves.”§ Those who conscientiously attend to it, do herein “justify God.”|| It is an appointment of our Saviour himself, as our text shews;—it was practised by his apostles under his direction, before his death, as well as after. ¶—It is “the answer of a good conscience towards God.”**—It was the constant practice of the primitive Christians.

It will probably be said here, “that the persons to whom the apostles preached had never been baptized in their infancy; but many professing Christians have; and therefore need not be baptized again. Consequently, the case is different now to what it was in the days of the apostles.” To which I beg leave to give a short answer. Supposing the truth of this. Supposing you have been baptized in your infancy; who appointed

* See Mat. iii. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Luk. vii.
30. || Ibid. v. 29. ¶ John iv. 1, 2. ** 1 Pet.
iii. 21.

appointed that you should be baptized then ? Did Jesus our great master, the only head of the church ? If he did, in what place of Scripture is this appointment found ? It is generally granted by thinking and candid men, that we have neither express command for, nor example of, the Baptism of Infants in the Scriptures. But certainly, every positive institution requires an express command to authorize and establish the practice of it ; and every wise lawgiver will take care that such express command be given ; especially when it can be done with the greatest ease. The *wisdom* of the blessed Jesus will not I trust be doubted by any of you.— And could it be *kind* of our Saviour, or consistent with his other declarations and manifestations of love and compassion to his followers, to expect them to perform a duty, of which he has not said a single word ? To suppose that infant-baptism is according to his mind, and that he meant it to be incumbent on parents to baptize them, when he has never said a word about it, is such a reflection upon his wisdom and kindness, as I hope there is no true Christian who would not shudder at.

It follows then, brethren, that as our Lord Jesus never instituted the practice of infant-baptism, there is no difference between the present and the primitive times, but what is made by man ; and consequently ought to be corrected. Whatever is introduced

introduced by man since the Scripture was completed, is an innovation, and requires reformation in the church of Christ. Such a practice is not a Christian practice, because not found among the Christian institutes. If Jesus, the Christian law-giver, have not commanded infant-baptism, it is certain that infant-baptism is not Christian baptism. You may then with safety, and you ought, in allegiance and subjection to your great and only Lord and law-giver, to relinquish all regard to your infant-baptism, to account it of no importance; and to give up yourselves to your blessed Saviour in his own institution, and be baptized according to his own appointment. Infants are not commanded to be baptized. No man is commanded by Jesus to baptize infants. Infants cannot be included in the grand commission before us. We have no account of infants being baptized by the Apostles. Therefore infant-baptism is no institution of Christ.

These remarks are made upon the supposition that you were *really baptized* in your infancy. But if you were only *sprinkled* in your infancy, you never were baptized at all. For sprinkling is not baptism. And consequently this is another reason why you ought now, if truly converted, to be "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

When I thus freely assert that "sprinkling is not baptism;" it is natural and rea-

sonable for you to expect that I should give some proof of it. The proof, brethren, that might be given, is abundant, and it is easy. But among so many other important subjects, I cannot pretend to enter largely upon it, within the limits of one short discourse. Instead of this enlargement, for the present, I beg your careful attention to the following hints.

That the word βαπτίζω, which we render *to baptize*, properly signifies *to immerse* or *dip*, is a truth that has often been abundantly proved, and is generally granted by men of learning and candor of all parties. I know the greatest part of my present audience are unable to judge for themselves on this subject, and therefore I shall not enlarge upon it, lest I should seem to be taking the advantage of your want of skill in languages. If any of you be able to examine the subject for yourselves, I am well assured, and I venture to assert, that you will find these two things to be undeniably evident. (1.) That this word never, in any good author, signifies to pour or sprinkle; and (2.) That its native, proper, and genuine signification is, *to immerse* or *overwhelm*. Those who have not capacity or leisure for this, may, I am persuaded, have sufficient evidence in the matter, by reading the authors who have written on the subject. I think whoever chuses to take this trouble will be ready to join with the great Bishop Bossuet in saying
that

that "to baptize signifies to plunge, is granted by all the world." Now if it be true, as it will certainly be found true, on examination of the subject, that sprinkling is not baptism; but a quite different thing, that has no relation to it, nor connection with it, it must be evident, that those who have only been sprinkled were never baptized; and that the sprinkling of infants is not Christian baptism.

There are, however, other considerations, level with every capacity, which sufficiently evince that Christian baptism is immersion, and not sprinkling. I mention two of these.

(1.) The places where the ordinance was administered. Those baptized by John the Baptist, were baptized in the *river Jordan*.* Is it usual to go to rivers to sprinkle a little water on the face? Do they who practise sprinkling at this day, go to rivers to perform it? Would it not be ridiculous if they did? Do you think this good and wise man would act such a ridiculous part? Does not his baptizing in the river then, appear to be inconsistent with the practice of sprinkling? But consider him as *dipping* the people in the river, and then all is plain, orderly, and wise, becoming a minister of the great God, all whose works and directions are wise and good. In another place we are informed that John was baptizing in

B 2

Ænon,

* Matt. iii. Mar. i.

Ænon, near to Salim, because there was *much water* there.”* Do persons who sprinkle only, chuse places where there is much water for the performance of it? Is it necessary that they should? Is much water required for that practice? Is not any place, capable of being inhabited, sufficiently supplied with water for the purpose of sprinkling? And would it not be a strange reason assigned, if it was said “a minister was *sprinkling* people at Ænon *because* there was much water there?” Is it not known to every one that one single spring, and that a very weak one too, would supply any minister with more water than he could regularly use for the purpose, suppose he were continually employed in the practice? But if John *immersed* these persons, as he certainly did, the reason assigned is clear and obvious. “*Because* there was much water there.” There are many places not suitable for baptizing, i. e. immersion, because there is not much water. But there was *much water* at Ænon, which made it convenient for the purpose. Therefore John was baptizing, i. e. dipping at Ænon. I leave it, brethren, to your consciences, to determine whether the passage be not clear, and the reason proper, if John *dipped* these persons. It is said, concerning Philip and the Eunuch, that “they came to a certain water—and Philip baptized the Eunuch.”† But why should this be delayed till

* John iii. 23. † Acts viii. 36, 38.

till they came to a *certain water*, if Philip did not immerse the Eunuch? Is it rational to believe that they could not meet with water enough to sprinkle a few drops on one single person's face, till they came to a water into which they could both go down; as the sacred historian informs, us they did? "And it would be very unnatural," says a great man, "that they went down to the water, merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the Eunuch. A person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his baggage, on such a journey, through so desert a country; a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them."* Now can any thing be more natural than the sacred historian's account of this matter, admitting that Philip *dipped* the Eunuch? And can any thing be more unnatural, if Philip only *sprinkled* him?

(2.) Consider the circumstances mentioned by the holy writers, attending the baptism of John's disciples, our Saviour, and the Eunuch particularly; and judge for yourselves, whether these are more consistent with dipping or sprinkling. When we are informed that the river Jordan was the place where John baptized, it is the most natural thing in the world, to suppose that he did not sprinkle those who came to his baptism. It is so much more commodious, easy, and

B 3

expe-

* Dr. Doddridge in Loc.

expeditious, to have the water, for that purpose, brought in a proper vessel, into some convenient room, that, one would think, the impropriety of going to perform it at a river, must strike the most superficial thinker. And hence we observe continually that sprinkling is never performed at rivers ; but in the manner I have just now mentioned. And I am persuaded that any man who had ever so great a number to sprinkle, would hazard his reputation as a man of sense, if he were to go and sprinkle at a river ; his conduct would wear absurdity on the very face of it.

We are not, however, left to conjecture in the case. We are expressly told that the people were baptized of John in Jordan ;* and that “ they were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan ;” † which would be more absurd and unaccountable still, if baptizing signified sprinkling. Would any man of sense take such a number of people into so large a river, in order only to sprinkle their faces ? It is said of our Saviour, likewise, that “ he was baptized of John in Jordan.” ‡

To set every thing before us in the clearest light, and to leave no room for doubt on the subject, we are farther informed, when our Saviour was baptized, *in* Jordan, he “ went up straight way *out of* the water.” || May I venture to ask again here, does not our

* Mat. iii. 6. † Mar. i. 5. ‡ Mar. i. 9.
Mat. iii. 16. Mar. i. 10.

our Saviour's coming *out of the water* plainly suppose, if the scripture had not told us so, that he was baptized in it? But when both these circumstances are expressly affirmed, there is not any room for hesitation. Is it rational to imagine he had been in it for the sake of being sprinkled? Do any now go into rivers for that purpose? Were any ever known to do it? Would it not be deemed ridiculous if they did?

The history of Philip and the Eunuch is equally clear and circumstantial. §“ *As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the Eunuch said, see, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more.*” Here the observations are;—that Philip and the Eunuch came *to the water*, before the discourse between them respecting baptism began.—That *at the water*, the Eunuch proposed himself as a subject of baptism; and made a profession of his faith.—That Philip, having obtained satisfaction respecting the genuineness of his faith, went down with him *into the water*:

B 4

not

§ See Acts viii. 36—39.

not *to* it; for they were come *to* the water, before the Eunuch mentioned his being baptized. But when they had conversed a while *at* the water, after they were come *to* it, they then went down both *into* the water, both Philip and the Eunuch.—And then, when they were both *in* the water, Philip baptized the Eunuch.—When the Eunuch was baptized, they came up *out of* the water. These are the circumstances; related with that simplicity which is so peculiar to the sacred writers; and which renders all their narrations at once so intelligible and so beautiful. But I will neither consume your time, tire your patience, nor affront your good sense by a formal proof that all these circumstances are clearly in favor of the *immersion* of the Eunuch; but perfectly inconsistent with a supposition that Philip *sprinkled* the Eunuch.

Many other arguments might be easily adduced to prove that christian baptism is not sprinkling, but immersion. But I must not indulge myself in a farther prosecution of the subject. The result is, that it is evidently the duty of all who would in this, as in other instances, approve themselves the genuine disciples of Jesus, to be immersed in water, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

The *English* phrase, “*in the name of,*” in common life, evidently signifies, “*by the authority of*”—thus a servant executes a message,

sage, or transacts business in his *master's name*; i. e. by his master's *authority*, and as his representative. And this appears clearly to be the exact signification of it, in several places of scripture. And it is certain that ministers baptize believers by divine authority. And therefore this passage is frequently so understood and explained. Yet I think I shall hardly do justice to our Saviour's words here, if I do not observe, that so far as I recollect, wherever we find the same phrase in our English bibles, in this sense, the construction of the Greek is different from that in the text before us.*

By consulting the original, and comparing the text with some other passages of like construction,† I believe it will appear, that “in the name of,” here signifies “into the worship or profession of, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” To give a public testimony of our devotional regard to the sacred Three; and to make a public pro-

B 5

fession

* *εις το ονομα*.—In all the places referred to above, I think we find, both in the Septuagint and the New Testament, not *εις το ονομα*, which is our Lord's phrase in the commission; but *επι τω ονοματι*, or *εν τω ονοματι*. The reader may consult 1 Sam. xvii. 45. 1 Sam. xxv. 5. 9. Ezra v. 11. Jer. xx. 9. in the Septuagint, and Mar. xvi. 17. John v. 43. x. 25. Acts iv. 17. 18. v. 28. 40. xvi. 18, &c. Greek. † We have the like construction, Rom. vi. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 13. 14. x. 2. Gal. iii. 27. And I think these passages confirm the sense I have given of our Saviour's words, though the Syriac, in Trameilius, Pagnine, and some others, render it *in nomine*, &c.

feſſion that we have relinquished the ſervice of ſin and the world; and are now beginning to be dependent upon, and employed for, the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; the remaining part of our lives.

It is very evident, that which ſoever of theſe interpretations of the words be preferred, the expreſſion is quite inconſiſtent with the practice of infant-baptiſm. Can it be truly ſaid that *infants* are baptized by the *authority* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt? Where is any ſuch authority found? In what part of the bible does it lie? Or, can it be truly ſaid that infants are baptized into the profeſſion, or worſhip of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt? With what propriety can this be aſſerted? Do children who are baptized in their infancy make any profeſſion of the ſacred three, or do they worſhip the ſacred three, more than thoſe who are not baptized in their infancy? It is certain they do not. And therefore, however we underſtand the words, they are evidently inapplicable to the baptiſm of *infants*. But in either ſenſe, they are applied with ſtriking propriety, to the baptiſm of *believers*. For every conſiderate and candid man will acknowledge this was performed by divine authority; and that when the bleſſed Jeſus, our great example, attended to this ordinance, the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, gave teſtimony of their approbation of it. And that, believers do,
in

in this ordinance, make a public profession of their belief of, and regard to, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is equally manifest, and universally known.

It cannot, indeed, rationally be supposed, that persons lately converted, have, in general, distinct views of any of the different methods of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity. This is confessedly one of the "deep things of God," which many ancient Christians, and even many eminent ministers are not so clear in as they sometimes wish to be. And I believe the generality of thinking and candid men will acknowledge that the Scriptures themselves are not very explicit either as to the *modus* of that distinction, or the nature of that union which subsists in the sacred Three; because it does not, by any means appear to be the design of the blessed God, that we should enter into curious and nice distinctions concerning the manner of his existence. Nor does it appear, after all our laborious searches and enquiries, that we are capable with certainty, of making these distinctions. For "who by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection."? * It is therefore absurd to suppose that persons who join in church-fellowship, should at that time, be much acquainted with this deep and glorious mystery. For

B 6

that

* Job. xi. 7.

that would suppose them proficient in divine knowledge, when they enter into the school of Christ. But that the Father is the source of wisdom, strength, and comfort, and of "every good and perfect gift;"† That these are all to be enjoyed through the Son, the "only mediator;" by the Spirit;‡ in which way alone, we "have access to the Father;"—these are doctrines clearly revealed; and without the knowledge of them, no man can be *notionally* a Christian: nor any man practically one, who has not learnt, in a measure, a practical regard to them; that is who has not learnt, in this manner, to draw near to God, as the fountain of all his happiness. It seems to me, therefore, that this is a *necessary* profession, and the *only* profession, with respect to the Trinity, that is necessary to be made by young converts, when they are admitted to the ordinances of the church of Christ.

III. We proceed to that part of our Saviour's directions, which respects those who are baptized—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." You have been taught, brethren, before you come into church fellowship, and you want teaching still. You who "have believed through grace," and are baptized, and admitted into our Lord's family on earth, are now to be trained up in knowledge and holiness, for his glorious mansions
in

† Jam. i. 17.

‡ Ephes. ii. 18.

in heaven. You, who know yourselves, are very sensible that you are still ignorant of many things; and want much farther instruction than you have hitherto received. And the evidence of this will encrease in proportion to the maturity and enlargement of your understanding. We, your ministers, though alas, too short-sighted and defective ourselves, are appointed to give you this needful instruction.

I may venture to observe here, that though our *English* version has the word *teach* in both these verses, yet the *Greek* words are different, and seem to be a little different in signification. At least the meaning of one appears to be more extensive than that of the other. The former denotes that teaching which is necessary to bring us into the church as the school of Christ.—The latter signifies the farther instruction which is necessary to make a person acquainted with the knowledge and practice of every duty, that he may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” By the *first*, we *persuade* men to become our Lord’s disciples, or scholars;—by the *second*, we *instruct* them, as his disciples, or scholars, in all the divine will.*

Baptism

* *Μαθηλεω* distinguitur a *διδασκειν*, eo quod *μαθηλεω* fit eos docere & erudire qui a magisterio & doctrina nostra alieni sunt, ut discipuli reddantur: *διδασκειν* vero docere significat eos, qui jam discipuli redditi sunt, & magisterio nostro jam addicti; quæ duæ notiones hic optime concurrunt:| Novarin. apud Leigh, in verbum *μαθηλεω*, Vid. & Poli Synopsin, in locum.

Baptism is an important duty, as it is enjoined by the Lord of glory, and enforced by his own example, and the examples of all the primitive Christians, and by many other solemn considerations; yet it is far from being the *whole* of duty. It is only as the porch in the house of God, where his family are all to be employed, as capacities and circumstances admit, for the honour of his great name, and the promotion of his interest. You come into this house of God, my friends, not to loiter and trifle, and to "sleep as do others;" but to exert yourselves in his service. Yet our Saviour's work is not slavery. "His yoke is easy, and his burden is light." "In keeping his commandments there is great reward." And when your work is done, there is a crown of glory for you that "fadeth not away."

The blessed Jesus has done much for you; and you profess to "love him because he first loved you." "If ye love him, keep his commandments" Shew your love to him in all your conduct, by your steady zealous regard to universal holiness. Should he not reward our obedience at last, he has already laid us under everlasting obligations to serve him with all our might. And after all, we are infinitely indebted to him. But in his super-abounding love, he has frequently assured us, that he will "reward every man according to his works." Depend upon it, therefore, that while you are faithfully and
diligently

diligently employed for him on earth, you are " laying up treasures in heaven."

We are to teach you, brethren, to "*observe* all things." Christianity is not merely a subject of speculation. It is a practical thing. The great object it has in view, and where it is influential, infallibly secures, is unreserved obedience to Jesus Christ, as the head of his church. It is far from being sufficient to *know* the mind of Christ. But " if ye know these things happy are ye, if ye do them."* Blessed are they, and only they, " who hear the word of God and keep it."†

We must *teach* you to observe these things. It is not enough for us to inform you what is your duty ; or to remind you of it. We must not only teach you what is to be done, but *how* you are to perform it right, as the word of God directs you. And we must enforce and charge it upon your consciences, by every rational and scriptural argument we can think of ; always testifying, that if you hope to be happy, while you are " hearers of the word," and not doers of it, you " deceive your own selves."‡

You must " observe ALL things, *whatsoever* our Lord hath commanded." The same authority which establishes one duty, establishes every duty. And it is an authority of infinite weight. It is the character of an hypocrite to observe one duty and neglect another.

* John xiii. 17. † Luke xi. 28. ‡ Jam. i. 22.

another.* Those whom our Saviour accounts his friends, are those who “ do whatsoever he commands them.” † And the character of those who arrive at heaven, is, that “ they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” ‡ Nor can any one have the least scriptural hope of entering those blissful regions, who lives in the neglect of one single branch of known duty. Not because duties are the foundation of our acceptance with God ; but because such neglect is inconsistent with regeneration, without which we “ cannot see the kingdom of God.” §

“ Whatsoever *I have* COMMANDED you, says our divine master. For nothing can be a part of religion, or acceptable to God, which has not the sanction of divine authority. There have been many things, since our Saviour’s death, as well as before, invented, recommended and enjoined by men. But submission to human authority in matters of religion, is, so far, a virtual renunciation of Christianity, and of the great author of it, our *only* master. || It is, in the apostle’s account, “ Not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” ¶

When our Lord says “ Whatsoever I have commanded you,” he evidently refers both

to

* Mat. xxiii. 23. † John xv. 14. ‡ Rev. xiv.
 4. § John iii. 3. 1 John iii. 7—10. || Mat. xxiii.
 8. ¶ Col. ii. 19.

to what he taught his apostles after his resurrection from the dead, and what he taught them in the days of his flesh, before his death. The night before his death, he told them he had many things to say to them, but they could not bear them at that time;* and after his resurrection, before his ascension, "he gave commandments to them," and spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,† namely the gospel dispensation, which he was then sending them to establish in the world. So that though we do not find a circumstantial relation of all which they taught being enjoined them by our blessed Redeemer, yet we have sufficient evidence, that they proceeded exactly according to his directions, after he ascended into glory.

I therefore observe, once more, that whatever instructions are given, and whatever duties are enjoined or recommended, in the ministry or writings of the apostles; these are the will of our Saviour, and must, as we would answer it with pleasure to him at the great day of account, be attended to, and practically regarded by all his professed followers. These we must teach you. These you must take care, through divine assistance, to observe and practice.

SECONDLY. Our time is elapsed; and therefore I shall only intreat the continuance of your patient attention to a very few

* John xvi. 12. † Acts i. 2. 3.

few words, to illustrate our Saviour's cheering promise annexed to this weighty commission. "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Jesus very well knew the difficulties that his servants would have to undergo, in his service. He well knew that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and would raise opposition against all who should be "on the Lord's side." He knew that Satan, the arch-enemy of all good, would exert his infernal rage and power to obstruct them. He knew that his ministers were "men of like passions with others;" and would stand in need of divine assistance.—He knew that his truths and ordinances would be contrary to the spirit and temper of worldly men;—and therefore, his ministers would always want a friend to stand by them; and he assures them such a friend should never be wanting; a friend who could never be defective in wisdom, power, or love. He pledges his veracity that they shall constantly enjoy his presence. "I am with you always." However arduous your labors;—however discouraging your circumstances;—however potent your adversaries;—whatever necessities or dangers you are in:—"Lo, I am with you always."

"I am with you,"—to observe what work you are employed in;—what your defects are;—what difficulties you labour under;—what dangers attend you;—what enemies

mies surround you ;—what you endure, and what you want :—I will carefully observe all.—“ I am with you,”—to comfort your minds,—to refresh your spirits ;—to invigorate your mental powers ;—to fortify you with courage ; to relieve your necessities ;—to remove your fears ;—to confound your foes ;—to be your ALL IN ALL. Only be attentive to my concerns ;—exert yourselves to advance my kingdom ;—to serve my interest ; to propagate my truths ;—to administer my ordinances faithfully, according to my direction, and I will not fail to be your faithful, constant, ever-present friend and helper.

“ I am WITH you.” The apostles were to be scattered abroad into various parts of the earth, as his ministers and people have been since. Yet blessed be our dear Redeemer, he is every where present ; and *can* be with them at all times, and in all places, to make them happy and useful ; and he *will* be thus present with them. Let all his ministers now present, rejoice in this kind promise ; and go forth to every part of their work “ in the strength of the Lord their God.” And let all his feeble followers rejoice in the same cheering consideration, in the same reviving truth : for though these gracious and condescending words are addressed more immediately to those who “ labor in the word and doctrine ;” yet all his sincere disciples have the same authority
to

to assure themselves, that they shall not be deprived of this invaluable blessing. For he hath mercifully said "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

"I am with you always, even to the END OF THE WORLD." As long as the world endures, there will be sinners, to be taught, and disciplined to Christ; and those who are taught and baptized, must be instructed in all the parts of duty. For the Scripture is given to us to be the only standard of right and wrong, and the supreme directory in all religious matters till the end of time. We shall always stand in need of our blessed Redeemer's assistance; and, glory be to his great name! we have a never-failing promise that such assistance shall be given. Let us then, encouraged by it, and in full expectation of its being fulfilled, go forth to our Saviour's work, and diligently observe his directions;—neither awed by the frowns, nor allured by the flatteries of men;—perfectly indifferent with respect to the treatment we meet with;—determined, under no consideration, to "be conformed to this world;"—or influenced by the dictates or examples of our dearest friends, where they deviate from the laws of Christ.—Let *his* promise be our comfort,—*his* word our guide,—and *his* spirit our support;

* Mat. xviii. 20.

port; and let us not "fear what man can do unto us." Let us all, both ministers and people, with regard to all our Redeemer's promises, and to all his commands, unite our hearts in pronouncing and subscribing the last word of my text. Let us all say AMEN. So let it be; even so, Lord Jesus!

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